

Congressional Gold Medal. He and others may well have saved our lives and protected our democracy. They did it without the support they needed from their leadership. They did it without the support from the Trump White House on down.

But those officers aren't the only ones who deserve our honor and our gratitude. They are not the only ones who put their lives on the line serving our country on January 6 or over the past year during this pandemic.

Every day, Capitol custodial staff do their jobs with skill, dedication, and dignity. They showed up for work during this pandemic even when many in this building didn't take it seriously and put those workers' health at risk by not wearing masks.

Capitol custodial workers were here on January 6, doing their jobs, when White supremacists stormed this building, barging into this Chamber, acting as though no one could ever possibly hold them accountable. Because the President was on their side, they thought they were invulnerable.

And when their rampage was over, it was largely the Black and Brown custodians who were left to restore dignity and respect to the Capitol. Their work allowed us to continue ours that night: certifying the electoral votes, securing the election and our democracy.

Many Americans were so moved to see those workers still doing their jobs. That is what service looks like. That is what love of country looks like. That is what the dignity of work is all about.

Unfortunately, it tells you a whole lot about the problems that have been allowed to fester for too long in this country: White supremacists make a mess; Black workers clean it up.

We have a lot of work to do to fix that and to ensure that hard work pays off for all workers in this country. We simply don't value and respect all work the way we should.

I think of the words of Dr. King, who, as you know, died fighting for workers, sanitation workers in Memphis. He said:

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

Dr. King said:

No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance.

No work is insignificant. All labor has dignity. We ought to treat it that way, starting with honoring these workers.

In the days after January 6, pictures of Capitol workers cleaning up after these terrorists were reported on the news, captured by dedicated journalists who also risked their lives to do their jobs that day. These photos struck a chord with so many people. Americans began writing thank-you letters, send-

ing them to the Architect of the Capitol to pass on to custodial staff, to police officers, and to others.

Many of these workers are represented by AFSCME Local 626, which gives workers a voice on the job and is also working on ways to honor its members.

Members of Congress should do the same. In the coming weeks, I will be introducing a Senate resolution to recognize the Capitol custodial staff for their bravery and their service to our country on January 6. I hope my colleagues will join me—all of them—not as Republicans or Democrats but as Members of this body, as Americans all.

This Capitol is the people's House. The insurrectionists ransacked it. The Capitol custodians picked up the pieces. They deserve our eternal gratitude. To all the Capitol custodians who come to work in this building each day to ensure our democracy functions, thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOMINATION OF JANET LOUISE YELLEN

Madam President, a few days after our first woman Vice President was sworn in, we are about to confirm the first woman to step into one of the leading roles in our economy. Janet Yellen made history when she served as Chair of the Federal Reserve. She is about to make history again as Secretary of the Treasury.

She will be the first person ever to have held all three of the top positions in our economy—Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, Chair of the Federal Reserve, and Secretary of the Treasury—and now more than ever, we need her leadership, her vision, and her appreciation for what makes this country work.

As Fed Chair and as a labor economist, Janet Yellen made it clear that she understands what drives our economy. It is not the stock market. It is not Wall Street. It is people. It is workers. Janet Yellen knows our economy is built by Americans who know the dignity of a hard day's work, whether you punch a clock or swipe a badge or work for tips or care for children or take care of your parents.

I remember in 2015 Chair Yellen came to Cleveland and toured the Alcoa plant not far from my house. She showed the kind of leadership we need, the kind of leaders President Biden is putting into the top jobs managing our economy—people who will get out of Washington, who will visit every sort of community in the heart of the country, and people who act on what they learn from workers in Chillicothe, in Springfield, in Youngstown and Moline, IL, where the next Presiding Officer comes from.

There is a lot more to our economy than a quarterly earnings report. Janet Yellen understands that. She will step into this job at a time when the contrast between the financial health of corporations and workers couldn't be starker.

We are in the midst of a public health crisis and an economic crisis. You

wouldn't know it if you looked only at the stock market or corporate profits. But under President Biden, under Janet Yellen, and under new leadership in the Senate, we are done measuring—we are just done measuring the economy that way. We are going to think about the economy the way workers and their families do—in terms of paychecks, whether they can make rent or pay the mortgage this month or afford childcare or pay for their prescription drugs. By those measures, people are hurting.

We hear a lot about what some people call the K-shaped recovery—that is one way of saying that the rich are getting richer while the middle class and low-income families continue to struggle. It was a problem before this virus, as you know. The pandemic has only made it worse, and it is layered on top of systemic racism and inequalities that have been allowed to fester for too long.

We have a tax code that favors the wealthy, that gives corporations a tax break when they move manufacturing jobs out of East St. Louis or out of East Cleveland overseas. Americans' hard-earned savings are at risk from the financial instability of climate change. China is aggressive, confident, and continues to threaten American jobs. The Internal Revenue Service wastes time and taxpayer money auditing working families, often Black and Brown families, instead of going after wealthy tax cheats. Wall Street rewards corporations that lay off employees and cut their pay and treat their workers as expendable. Risky behavior on Wall Street—like it did in the last crisis—can devastate communities in Ohio and around the country.

I have confidence that Janet Yellen understands these vast challenges and that she will get to work immediately to take them on and to create a better, more prosperous, more stable economy, centered on the dignity of work. She knows we can build new, cleaner infrastructure that puts people to work at good-paying union jobs. We can invest in the country, including the small towns and industrial cities of Southeast Ohio and Southern Illinois and the Black and Brown communities in our cities that too often get left behind. We can make it easier for people to afford housing and transportation and childcare. We can create a tax code that rewards work instead of wealth, starting with a dramatic expansion of the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit. We can give people more power over their lives and their own money with options like monthly distribution of the child tax credit and no-fee bank accounts. That is the vision Janet Yellen and Joe Biden and Senate Democrats are committed to—one where the middle class is growing and everyone has the opportunity to join it.

Janet Yellen has the experience, the talent, and the commitment to service to deliver results. She is the right person for these tumultuous times. She

will rise to meet this moment to help our country build back better. I ask my colleagues to support Janet Yellen for Secretary of the Treasury.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

59TH INAUGURATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, last week, the country and the world watched as our Nation carried out one of its most sacred traditions—the peaceful transfer of power, which is the hallmark of American democracy, that has defined our country since its earliest days. Between the pandemic and heightened security concerns, this inauguration looked far different than those of former Presidents, but the will of the people was carried out just as it has been following every Presidential election throughout our Nation's history.

President Biden, in his inaugural address, stressed the importance of unifying our country. I agree, and I hope that the President and our Democratic colleagues in Congress lead by example.

FILIBUSTER

Madam President, our first order of business has been to fill critical positions throughout the Federal Government, and the Senate has already confirmed the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense, both of whom I supported. This afternoon, we will vote on the confirmation of Janet Yellen to be Secretary of the Treasury, whom I intend to vote for, as well, and there is a slate of other important positions that need to be filled in the coming days and weeks.

I should note that voting to confirm a nominee, under the words of the Constitution—providing advice and consent—is not a rubberstamp of the administration's policies. I know there will be important issues that we will disagree on, but if elections mean anything, they mean that the prevailing party should not be knee-capped as, unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues did to the previous administration when it tried to install a new Cabinet and agency heads. Rather, I believe the tradition has been to accommodate one another when we can so the administration can carry out its duties.

This morning, I had a very good conversation with Judge Merrick Garland, whom President Biden has nominated for Attorney General. Judge Garland's extensive legal experience makes him well suited to lead the Department of Justice, and I appreciate his commitment to keeping politics out of the Justice Department. That is my No. 1 criterion for who should be the next head of the Department of Justice, the

Attorney General. I think both sides should support a depoliticized Justice Department, and that is what I hope Judge Garland, once confirmed, will deliver. I look forward to talking to him more during the confirmation process, but unless I hear something new, I expect to support his nomination before the full Senate. It is in the best interest of the country to have qualified, Senate-confirmed individuals leading our Federal departments and agencies.

As we look beyond the confirmation process, there are many opportunities for Republicans and Democrats to work together in those places where we agree, and I know additional coronavirus relief, as it is needed, is high on President Biden's list. Approximately 1 million Americans are being vaccinated every day, and while the light at the end of the tunnel is getting bigger and brighter, we are still not in the clear. Congress has provided trillions of dollars in relief to strengthen our fight on both the healthcare and economic fronts, but we need to remain vigilant in the final, critical phase of this battle.

I don't support President Biden's pandemic relief proposal in its current form, but I do believe it is a starting point for bipartisan negotiations. I will gladly support a reasonable, targeted bill as we determine precisely, as we can, where the needs truly are. We all agree we need to bolster vaccine manufacturing and distribution; that some Americans need additional financial support; and that Main Street businesses and their workforces are still struggling to survive this economic recession. I hope the administration will be willing to work with Congress to reach an agreement that receives broad, bipartisan support as each of the previous bills that we have passed has.

During my time in the Senate, I have worked with folks across the aisle on our shared priorities, and I have no plans of changing that practice now, but make no mistake: I will push back, forcefully, respectfully, when the President and I disagree. One of the things I have learned, though, is that there is a difference between what some elected officials say and what they actually do, and rather than listen to what they say, I really prefer to watch what they do and see if those are consistent. Only hours after being sworn in and speaking of unifying the country, President Biden unilaterally canceled the permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline, and on the same day, the administration halted all new energy leasing and permitting on public lands and waters. With these unfortunate actions, President Biden is killing thousands of well-paying U.S. jobs and kicking the U.S. energy industry while it is still struggling from the pandemic.

I had hoped and still hope to work with President Biden on an all-of-the-above energy strategy that prioritizes our fossil fuels—we have 280 million

cars on the road, and people are still going to need gasoline for the foreseeable future—renewables, and innovative technologies that help us harness our most prevalent and reliable energy sources. One of the things that, I think, is exciting about some of the research that is being done is on carbon capture technology, which ought to be, again, something that we can all agree on as we transition to the next forms of energy.

As we begin a new Congress and welcome a new President, I am, once again, reminded of the words that were quoted from Ruth Bader Ginsburg, recently deceased Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. She didn't originate it, but she did make it popular when she said, "You can disagree without being disagreeable." Of course, democracy itself expects a competition of ideas but not necessarily the mudslinging and name-calling that have become all too common. I hope we can return to the respectful battles in the days and months ahead and know there is no better battleground for that to happen in than in the Senate, where sometimes—sometimes—we live up to the billing as the world's greatest deliberative body.

The primary feature that separates the Senate from the House or any other legislative body is that of free and full debate. That is why it takes 60 votes to cut off debate—so that you can then vote and pass a piece of legislation with 51 votes. It forces us to do what we ought to do anyway, which is to have fulsome debate, allow minority views to be presented, and then, once the debate is concluded, have a vote on the underlying bill. Fundamentally, the Founders saw the Senate as a place that protected minority rights. I have been here long enough to be in the majority and in the minority, and we know what goes around comes around in the U.S. Senate. It is as sure as day follows night. That is why we are called a deliberative body. In the House, you have 435 Members, and in order to pass a bill, all you need is a majority. Got the votes? Jam it through. Yet there has to be someplace, somewhere, in a nation of 330 million souls, where competing ideas can be seriously debated, and that is why our Founders created the U.S. Senate.

George Washington was famously said to have told Thomas Jefferson that the Senate was meant to be a saucer to cool House legislation like a saucer was used to cool hot tea. Well, if partisan bills are the hot tea, then the Senate cloture requirements are the saucer. Rather than a simple majority here in the Senate, you have to get 60 out of 100 Senators to support a bill in order for it to advance. I know we all would love to see each of our ideas passed into law without any delay or extended debate, but that is not the way the Senate is supposed to work. It forces us to do what we ought to want to do anyway, which is to do the hard